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# LODI HISTORIAN



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## EARLY WINERIES IN LODI

*By Ralph Lea and Janice Roth*

Wine grape growers in early Lodi and the surrounding areas had to haul their wine grapes to the El Pinal Winery until about 1900. The El Pinal Vineyard and Winery was located two miles northwest of Stockton. In 1852 George and his brother, William B. West, planted some 40 varieties of grapes. In 1858, the brothers manufactured wine

under a tree, but by 1889, their winery produced 350,000 gallons of wine and brandy.

George Perley of Woodbridge planted wine grapes in 1861. A. T. Ayers and Ezekiel Lawrence planted wine grapes along the Mokelumne River around the same time. They hauled their grapes to the El Pinal Winery until the turn of the century.

Adolph Bauer, Jacob Brack and John Guggolz built the first area winery at the Urgon Station a mile north of Lodi along the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks.

In 1903, the Urgon Winery was sold to George West & Son and renamed the San Joaquin Winery. At the same time George West built a winery in Lodi on Sacramento Street,



*Community Grape Corporation on North Sacramento Street at the Mokelumne River, in Lodi. ▲*





◀ Woodbridge Vineyard Association on the south side of Turner Road, east of the Western Railroad.



Lodi, Sept. 30, 1915 on Pine Street at the S.P.R.R. tracks; Joe and Lawrence DePauli on ends of picture; Emil Nies, 2nd from right; loading grapes in train car gondola for delivery to El Pinal Winery. ▼

just south of Lodi Avenue, where the Spiekerman Concrete Pipe Co. was later located.

Woodbridge Vineyard Association, organized in 1905, is the oldest cooperative winery in the Lodi area and maybe in the state of California. Thirty-nine growers agreed to deliver eight tons of wine grapes for each share they owned. Three thousand one hundred thirty-eight tons were placed in the pool. An index was used with Zinfandels rated at 100%, Tokays 75% and other







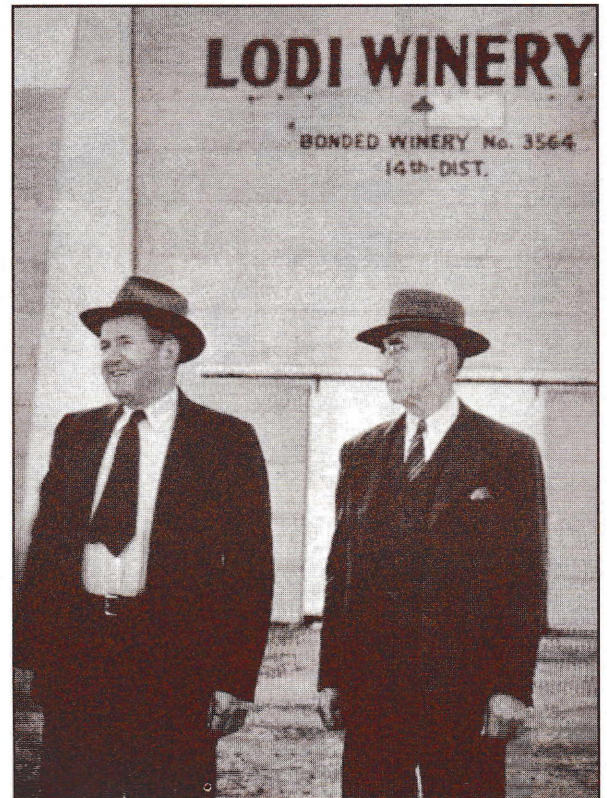
▲ West Winery in Lodi, c. 1905, between Southern Pacific Railroad and Sacramento Street, south of Lodi Avenue.

varieties in between. They made dry wine the first year and operated until 1918, the start of prohibition. The group sold their plant at that time but re-organized in 1933 with the repeal of prohibition. They purchased the old Bradford Winery, northwest of Galt. In 1946, they built a new winery at Villinger Station on the Western Railroad at Turner Road.

In 1908, the grape growers built the Farmers Mutual Winery just east of Victor on the north side of the railroad. Officers were R. F. (Frank) Green, President; Ludwig Reimche,

Vice President; L. M. Lewis, Secretary. This early Lodi Co-op winery was sold to George West & Co., but after five years the Victor growers took back their winery only to sell it again in 1923 to Jacob Knoll.

Lee Jones built the Mokelumne Winery in 1909 on the north end of Sacramento Street between Turner Road and the Mokelumne River and just west of the railroad. In 1922, he sold it to Lodi growers who turned it into a Co-op and named it the



Lodi Winery, Urgon, California, Woodbridge Road and Southern Pacific Railroad; Henry Schnaidt, President of Lodi, and J. N. Ballantyne, Secretary of Lodi and Director F.I.

Community Winery. Edward Pope, William Spooner, H. G. Mettler and J.V. Bare were some of the leaders at the beginning.

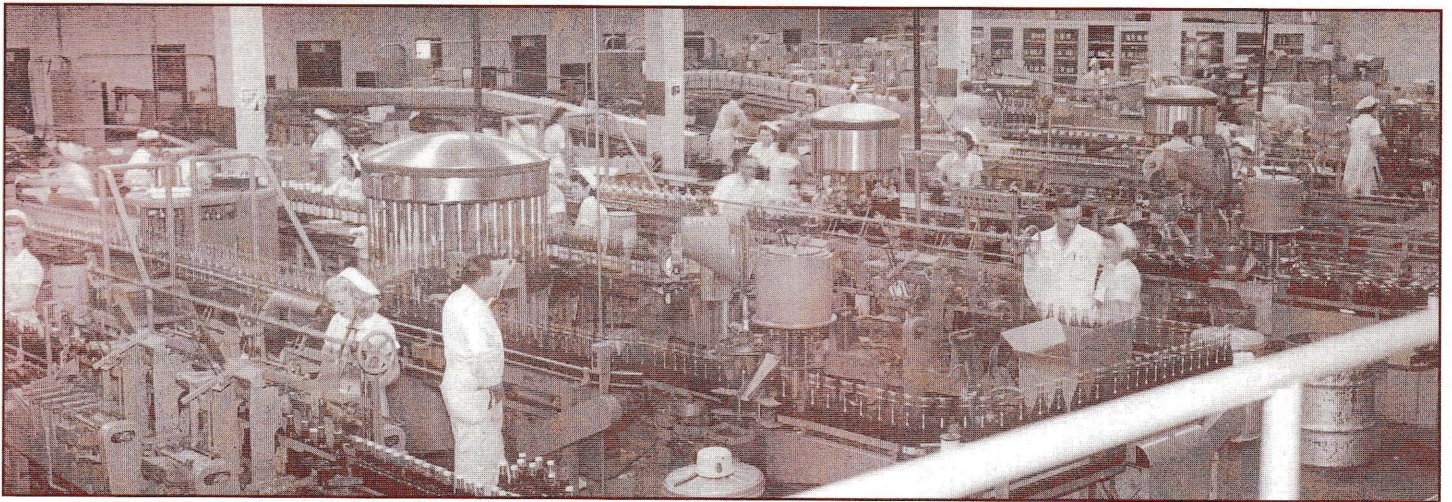
On May 1, 1918, J.V. Bare purchased the 320-acre Boyce Ranch and Lodi's newest winery, The Roma Wine Co., opened its Victor Road plant east of the traction line. It



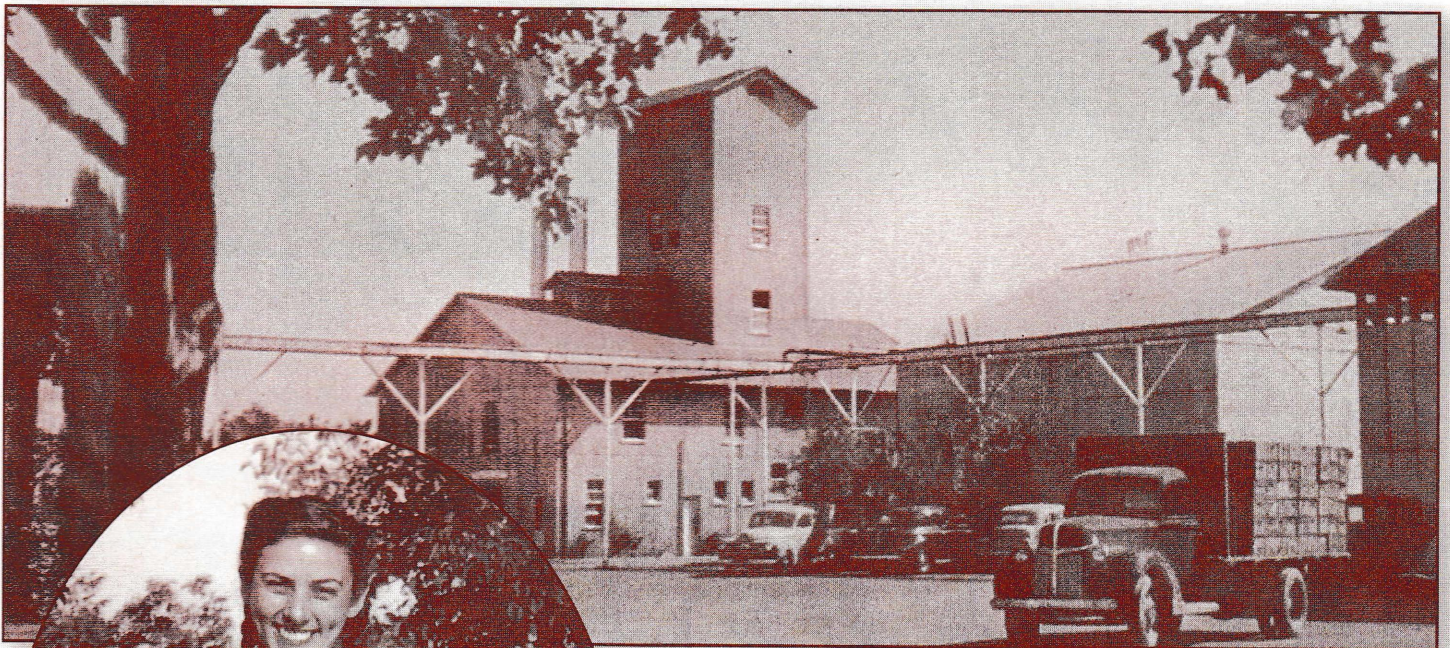
▲ The Community Grape Corporation, Turner Road and Sacramento Street.

Photo courtesy of San Joaquin County Museum

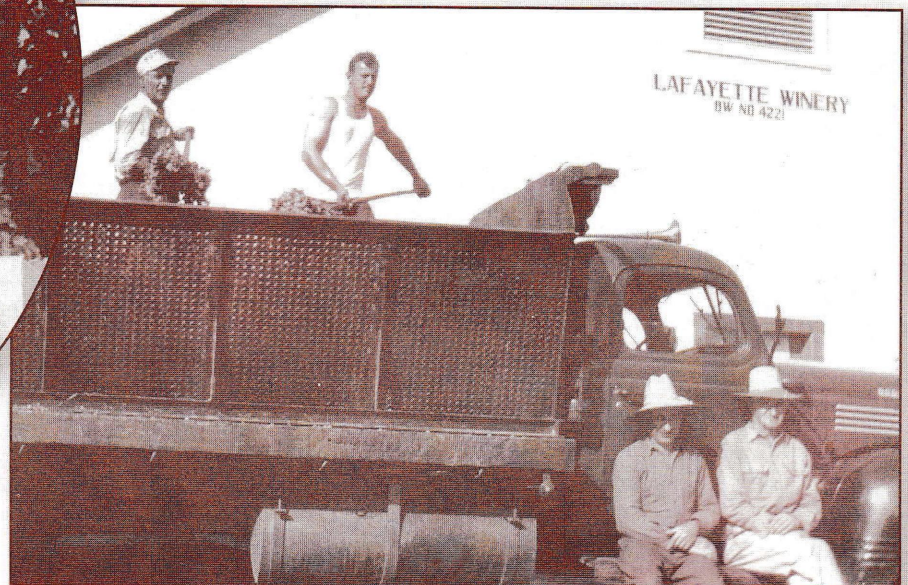




▲ Guild Wine Bottling on the south side of the Mokelumne River and west side of the Central California Traction line.  
Photo courtesy of San Joaquin County Museum



Cherokee Vineyard Association, with the still in the center. It later became Mountcalm and then Woodbridge. ▲



The Lafayette Winery on the south side of Sargent Road, Rt. 2, Box 391 was owned by Philip Gemellos and operated from 1935 to 1959.  
Above: Mary Gemellos. ▶



offered \$22 a ton for 10,000 tons. Roma Winery had the largest capacity for storing wine during the late 1930's.

After 1922, when Lee Jones sold his Mokelumne Winery, he and Mr. Shewan built the Shewan Winery east of the Southern Pacific Railroad and south of Turner Road.

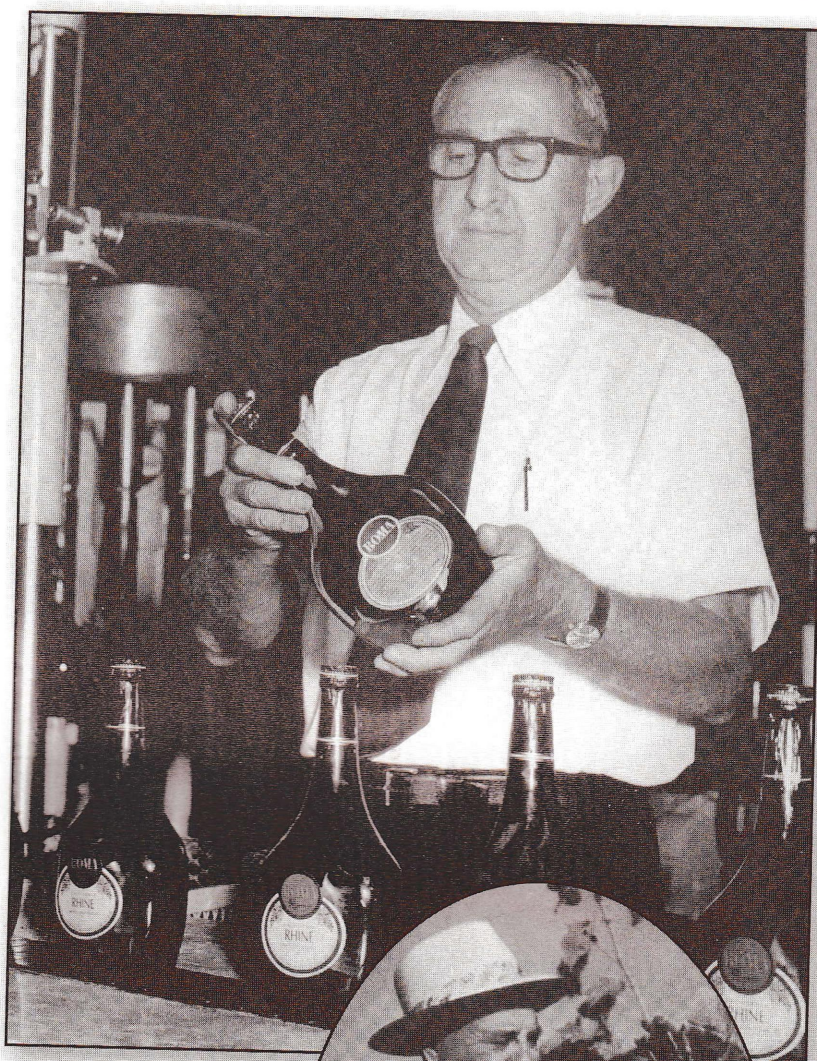
In 1928, Laurence Sebastiani reopened the Woodbridge Vineyard plant under his name and made sacramental and medicinal wines during the time of the prohibition. From 1933-1954, he made wine and brandy.

Early in the 1930's, J. P. Gundert started the Acampo Winery and Distillers, hiring Archie Celini as winemaker and using the 1876 grainery and warehouse in Acampo on the west side of the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1945, Dino Barengo purchased the Acampo Winery from the Gibson Wine Co. and named it Barengo Cellars.

In 1933, Roma Winery enlarged their facilities and added a large bottling room. A second winery was built in Woodbridge by Puente de Madera Wine Co. Later it was called Mokelumne and was owned by John Wiederrich, Gus & Fred Frey and Charles Beckman.

H. E. Looser and F. J. Hurd enlarged and reactivated the Urgon Winery. The Community Winery, Shewan-Joens and the Jacob Knoll Winery are all operating in 1933. The U.S. Government allowed them to crush in anticipation of the repeal of the 19th amendment (prohibition).

In October of 1933, the Wine Grape Growers of Lodi were lined up in their trucks with boxes of grapes to be crushed at Lodi's Wineries.



▲ Lawrence Quaccia  
local winemaker of  
Roma Wine.

Photo courtesy of  
San Joaquin County Museum

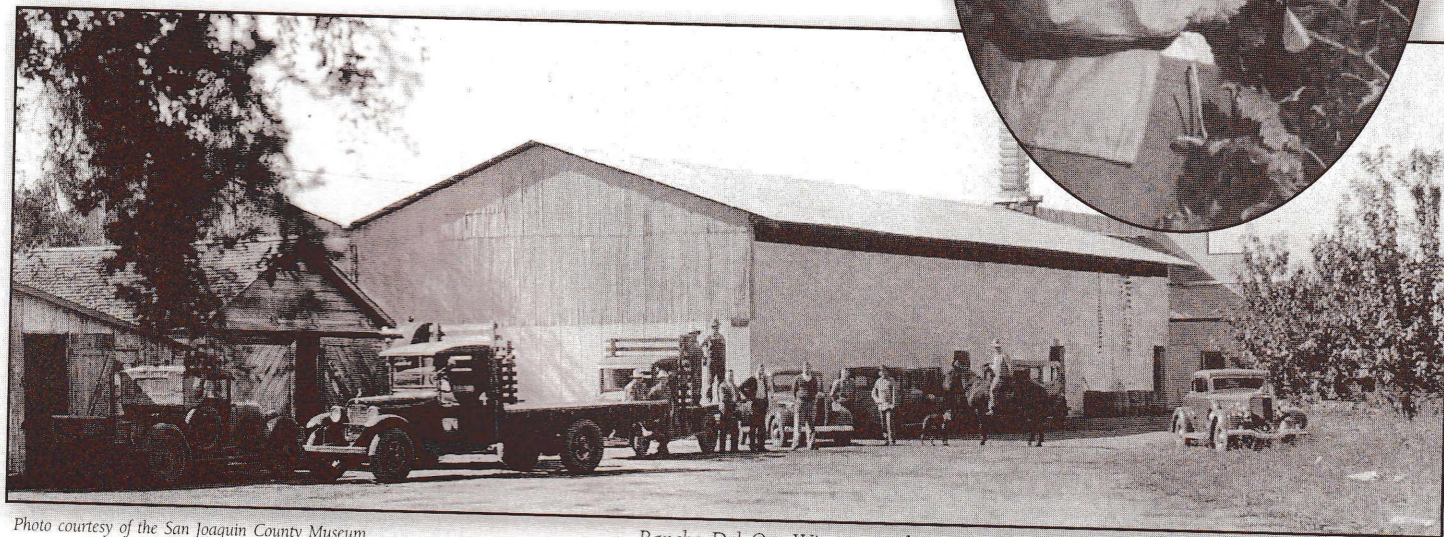


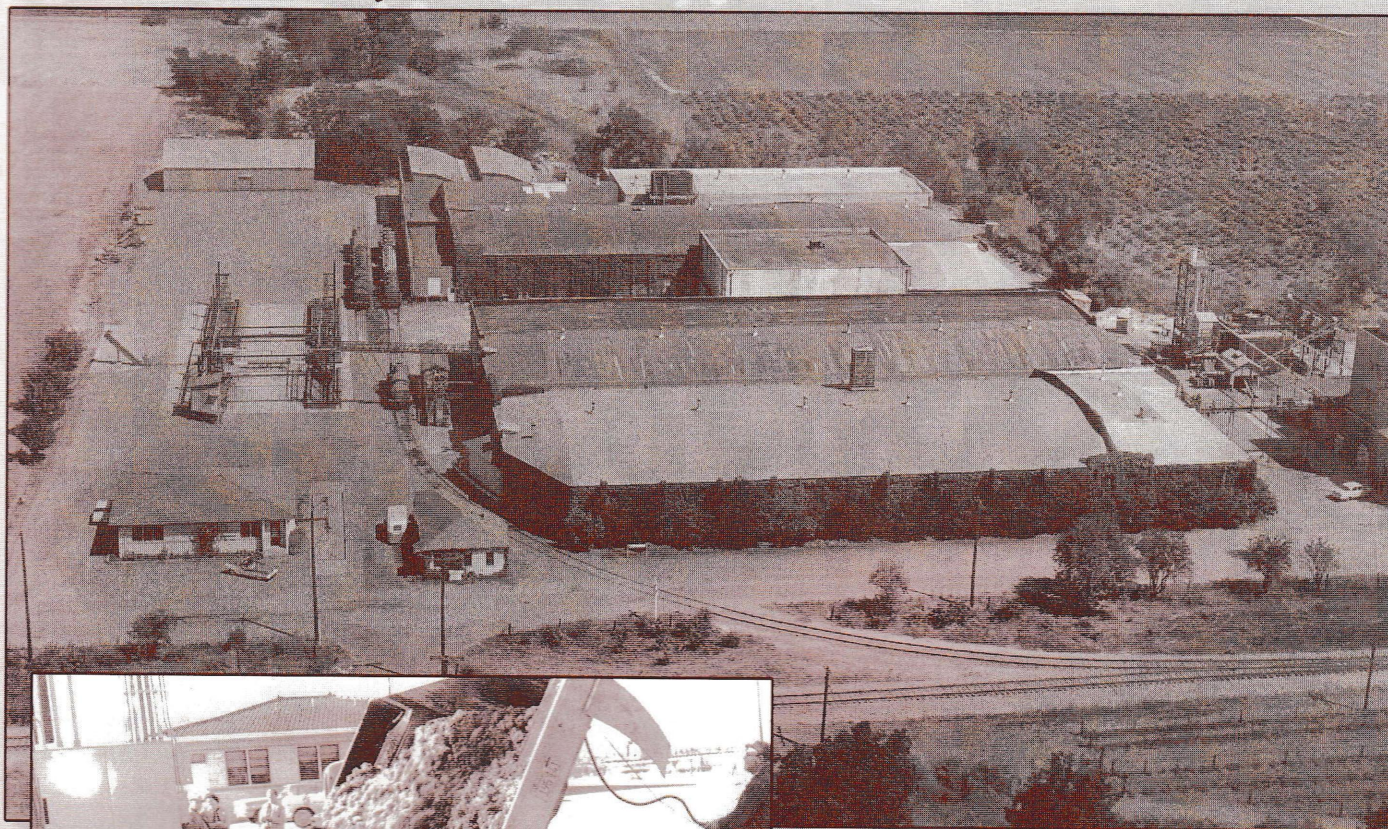
Photo courtesy of the San Joaquin County Museum

Rancho Del Oso Winery, on the northwest corner of Davis Road and Woodbridge Road.▲  
Inset: Mr. J.V. Bare, president of F.I., owner of Del Oso.



# EARLY LOD

## Bear Creek Winery



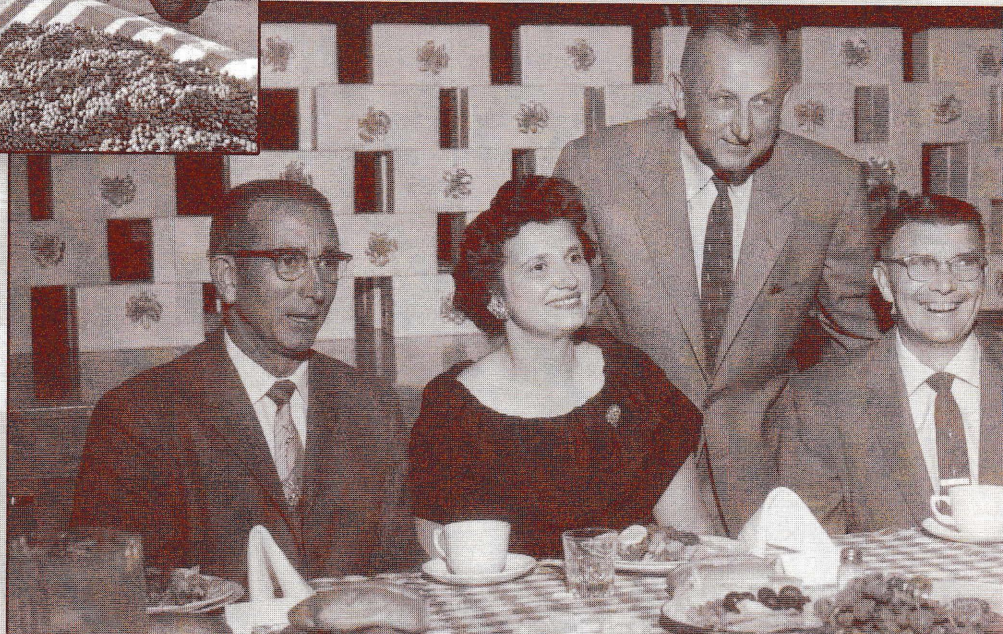
▲ Bear Creek Winery.



▲ Grapes unloaded at the Bear Creek Winery.



Guild window display in background.

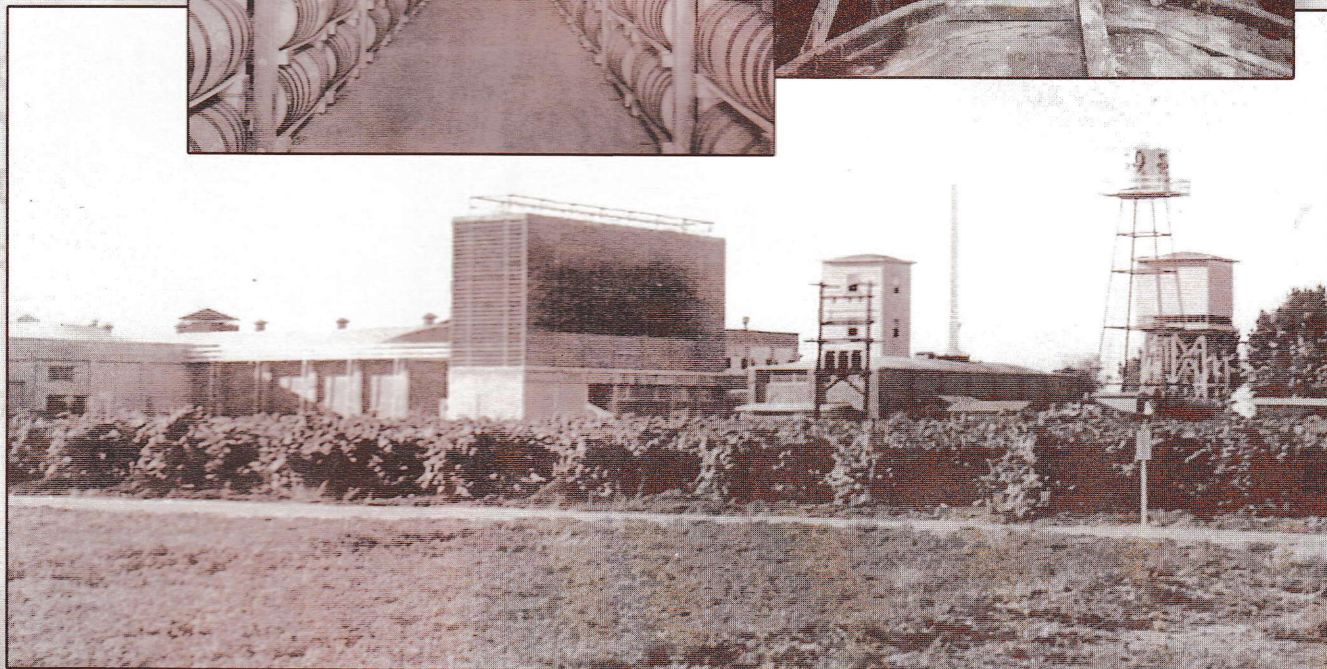
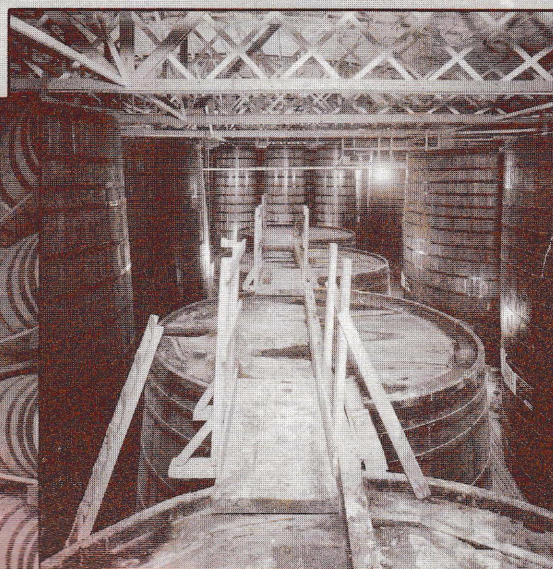


▲ From left to right: Raymond (Red) Mettler, Laura Quaschnick, managers of Bear Creek Winery; Art Handel, D Growers Guild, and Allen Poole, Winemaker and Chemist for Bear Creek Winery.



# I WINERIES

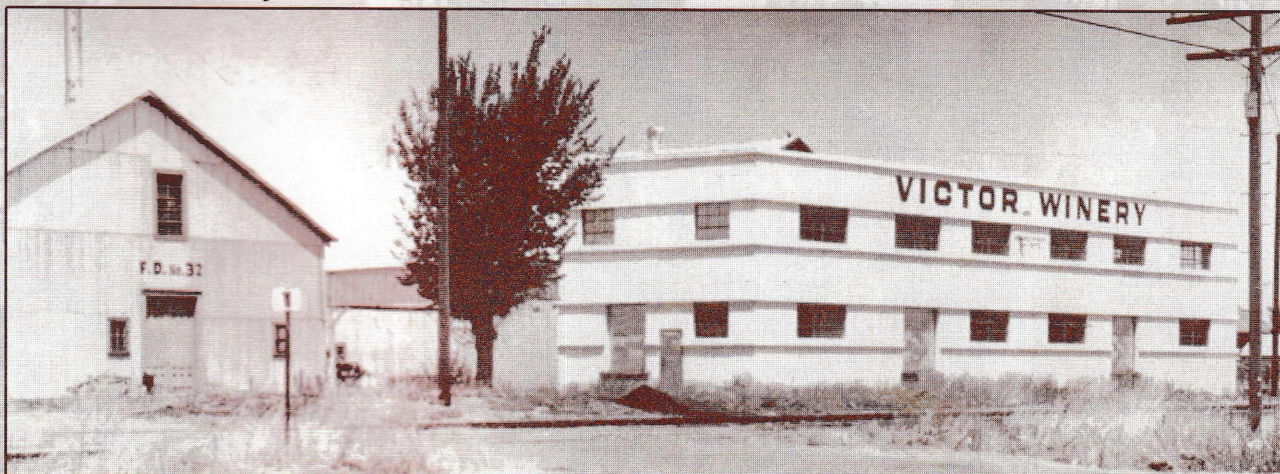
*Shewan-Jones, Inc.*



*Photo courtesy of San Joaquin County Museum*

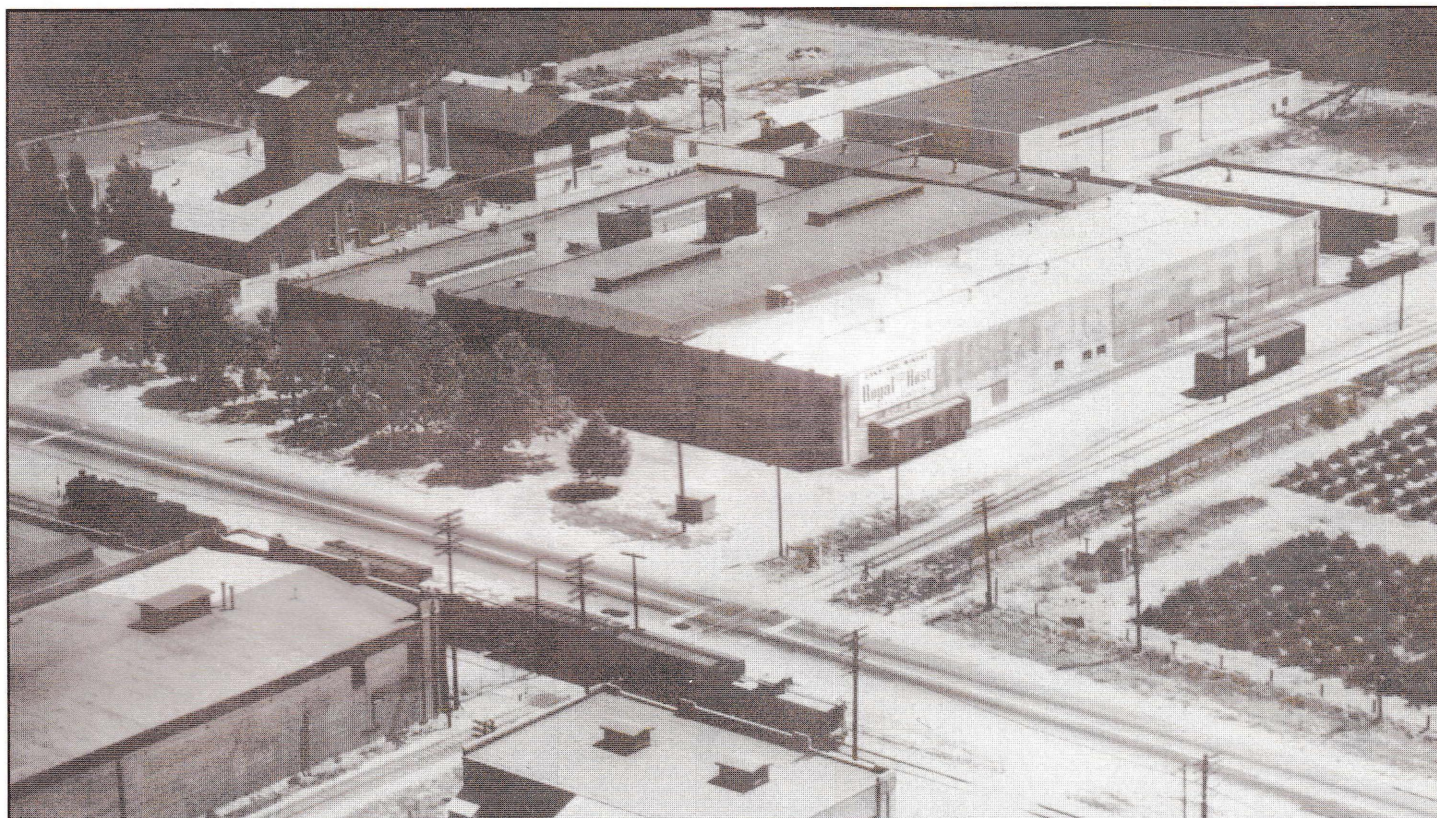
*The Shewan-Jones Winery, Sept. 15, 1936. ▲*

## *Victor Winery*



*Victor Winery, located on the northeast side of town, Federal Distillery #32. ▲*





▲ 1947; Victor Road east of the Central California Traction Co., Eastside Winery on the right and Roma Winery on the left.



▲ Eastside Winery, 1935; directors at scale. Standing (l to r): Henry G. Mettler, Herman C. Lange, Jake Kurtz, and Adolph Nies. Front row (l to r): Hermann Volbrecht, Edward Preszler and E. J. Mettler

Sebastiani at Woodbridge, Knoll at Victor and Roma on Victor Road, at the traction line, all had trucks lined up to unload grapes. The lines were so long that it took almost a day to unload after reaching the scale and crusher. The price of \$7.50 a ton was lowered to \$5.00 a ton one Chella saw the long line of trucks in front of his winery (Roma).

This made the farmers unhappy and while they stood in groups waiting to move their trucks forward in line, they made the decision to build their own wineries. Thus the co-ops were formed.

Eastside Winery was built just south of Roma Winery with directors E. J. Mettler, Jake Kurtz, Adolph Nies, Ed Preszler, H. G. Mettler, Herman Lange and Herman Volbrecht. Bear Creek Winery was built on the east side of the California Traction Railroad between Armstrong and Live Oak Roads with L. K. Marshal, Red Mettler and Laura Quashnick as owners.

Del Rio Winery was built in northwest Woodbridge just south of the Mokelumne River. W. E. Garrison was president, J. C.



Skinner was vice president, S. W. Beckman was secretary, B.A. Towne, O. L. Marrs, J.E. Devine, H. McClain, Chas. Fore and Eugene Bender were all directors.

Woodbridge Vineyard Association was again a Co-op, but was located at the Old Bradford Winery north of Galt until 1946. That same year Lockeford Winery started as a Co-op and located on the Old Locke Road about a mile from the town of Lockeford on the south side of Valley Springs Railroad.

Lodi Winery (the Old Urgan) changed to a co-op in 1940 with Henry Schnaidt as President and J. N. Ballantyne as Secretary. Cherokee Vineyard Association started as a co-op by Elbert Covell, president and was located at Woodbridge Road near the California Traction Line.

Some smaller private wineries were started in 1935. Chris Alexander started Alex's Winery on Telegraph Road (now Devries) and later his sons, George and Dennis, moved to the Old Grape Juice Plant on the south 99 Frontage Road just north of Woodbridge Road and called it Coloma Wine Cellars.

The same year Philip Gemellos started the Lafayette Winery on the south side of Sargent Road (Rt. 2 Box 391) in a large barn. He and his six children operated it for 24 years.

In 1946 Herb Buck, Sr. and Schuman started their bulk crushing plant at Youngstown located at Acampo & Kenefick Roads and west of the California



50 pounds of wine grapes in lug boxes at Del Rio Winery. ▲

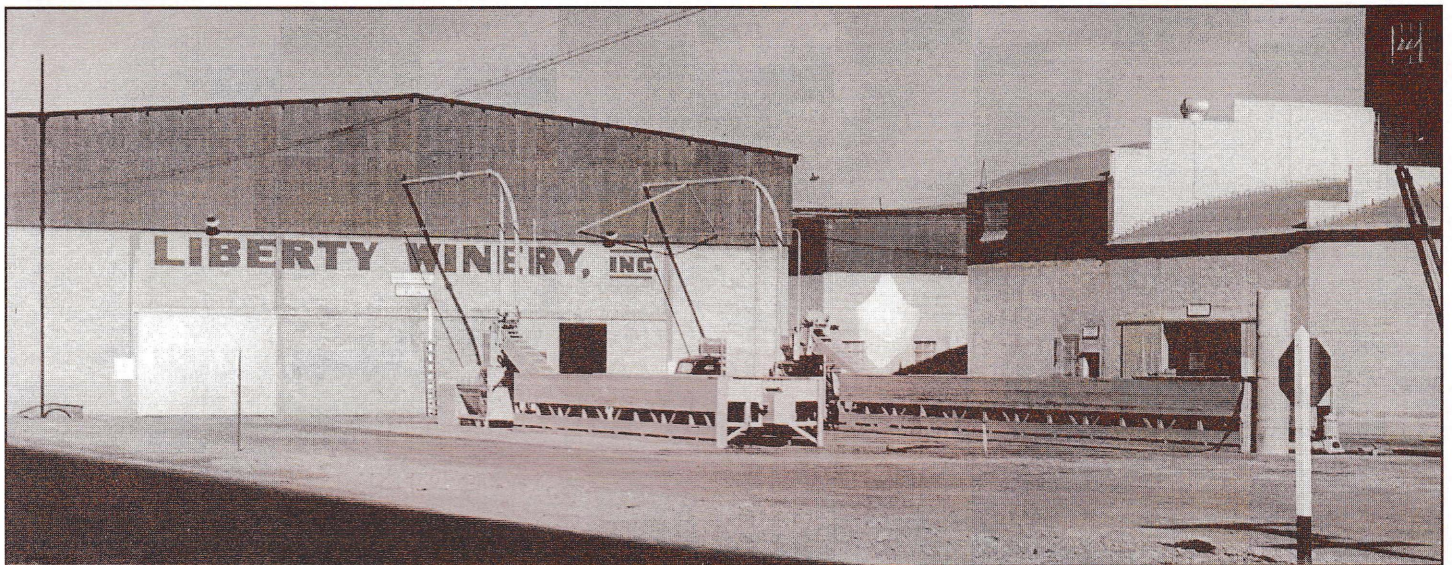


Grape testing for sugar at Del Rio Winery. ▲



Del Rio Winery Directors, 1946; Front row (l to r): J. E. Devine and W. E. Garrison, President. Back row (l to r): H. H. McClain; J. C. Skinner, Vice President; B.A. Towne; O.L. Marrs; S. W. Beckman, Secretary; Chas. Fore and Eugene Bender. ▲





▲ The Liberty Winery, owned by Herb Buck, Youngstown.

*Photos courtesy of the San Joaquin County Museum.*



▲ Gondola grape trucks waiting to unload at Liberty Winery, in San Joaquin County, c.1955.  
*Courtesy the Bank of Stockton Historical Photograph Collection.*

Traction Railroad. Gallo received most of their product.

J. V. Bare started his Rancho Del Oso Winery at the northwest corner of Davis & Woodbridge Roads. Bare was president of the Fruit Industries, wine marketing group that included his plant plus Community, Cherokee, Lodi and Woodbridge Vineyard Association. The second marketing group was the Guild located northeast of Lodi and Guild Ave. near the California Traction Line. Guild handled the products from Del Rio and Bear Creek Wineries.



▲ The Eastside Winery Growers, 1935.

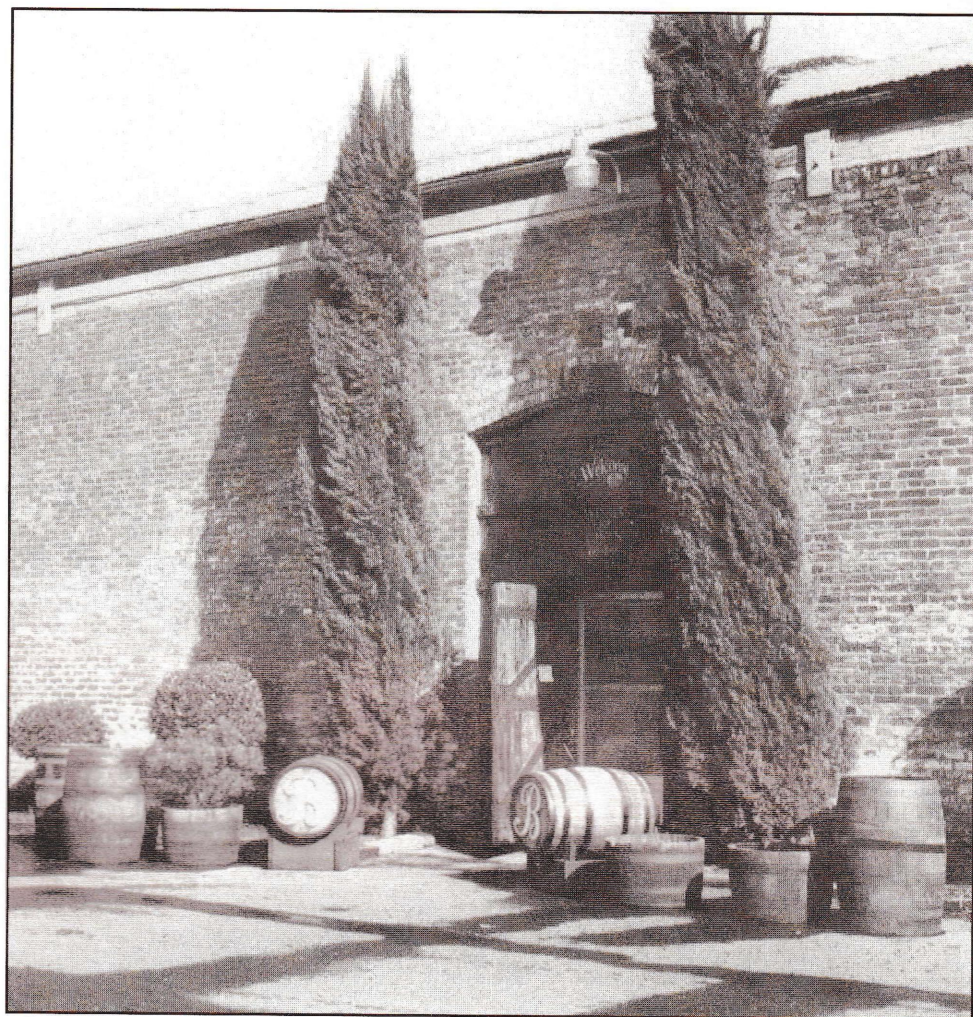


The use of the cooperative form of organization in agricultural products, where the farmers control the processing and marketing has experienced success, but the Lodi Co-op Wineries failed in the long run. They were formed in periods of adversity. The members elect a board of directors who hire management that takes control of sales.

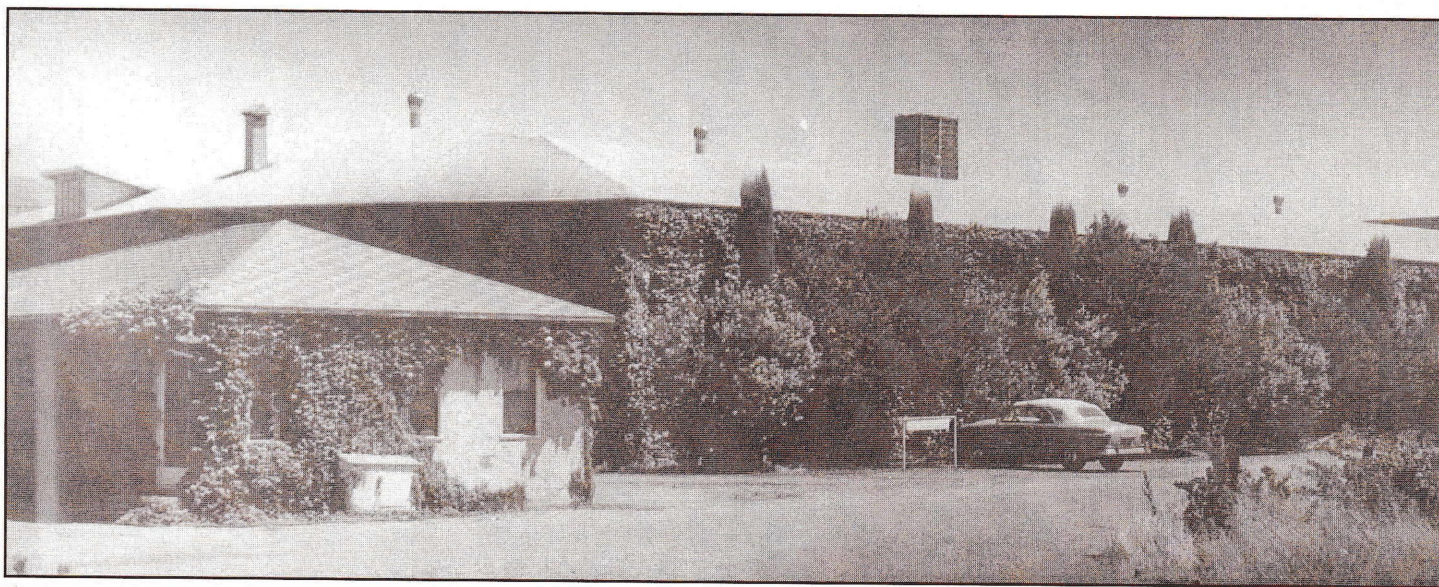
They make wine from the grapes that the growers chose to deliver. They were not always able to produce the wine varieties that were currently in demand. The directors set the index grape rating on their own grapes. The sales managers were not required to obtain sales equal or greater than the current commercial price.

The Lodi wineries also produced four times as much sweet wine as dry (table) wine each year. Producing a gallon of sweet wine required twice the amount of grapes than producing a gallon of dry wine and they sold for about the same price.

In 1954, Guild and California Wine Association, formerly the Fruit Industries, voted not to merge. This may have been the beginning of the end for the Lodi Cooperative wineries.



▲ Built by D. M. Denahay for a grain warehouse in 1868, this may well be the oldest building in Acampo. It became the Acampo Fruit Growers facility in 1911 and later housed the tasting rooms for the Los Hills/Bergengo Winery. Acampo Winery and Distillers, Inc. was started in 1934 by Frank L. Murphy. The operation was very successful and in 1944, the property was purchased by Dino Barengo. In the 1960s, he renamed the business Barengo Vineyards. Later it was known as Los Hills/Barengo Winery and was owned by Herb Benham in the 1980s.  
Courtesy the Bank of Stockton Historical Photograph Collection.



▲ The main cellar of Guild Winery.





▲ The Lodi Grape Festival; Peggy Celini and Helen Dickman.

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### THE LODI HISTORIAN

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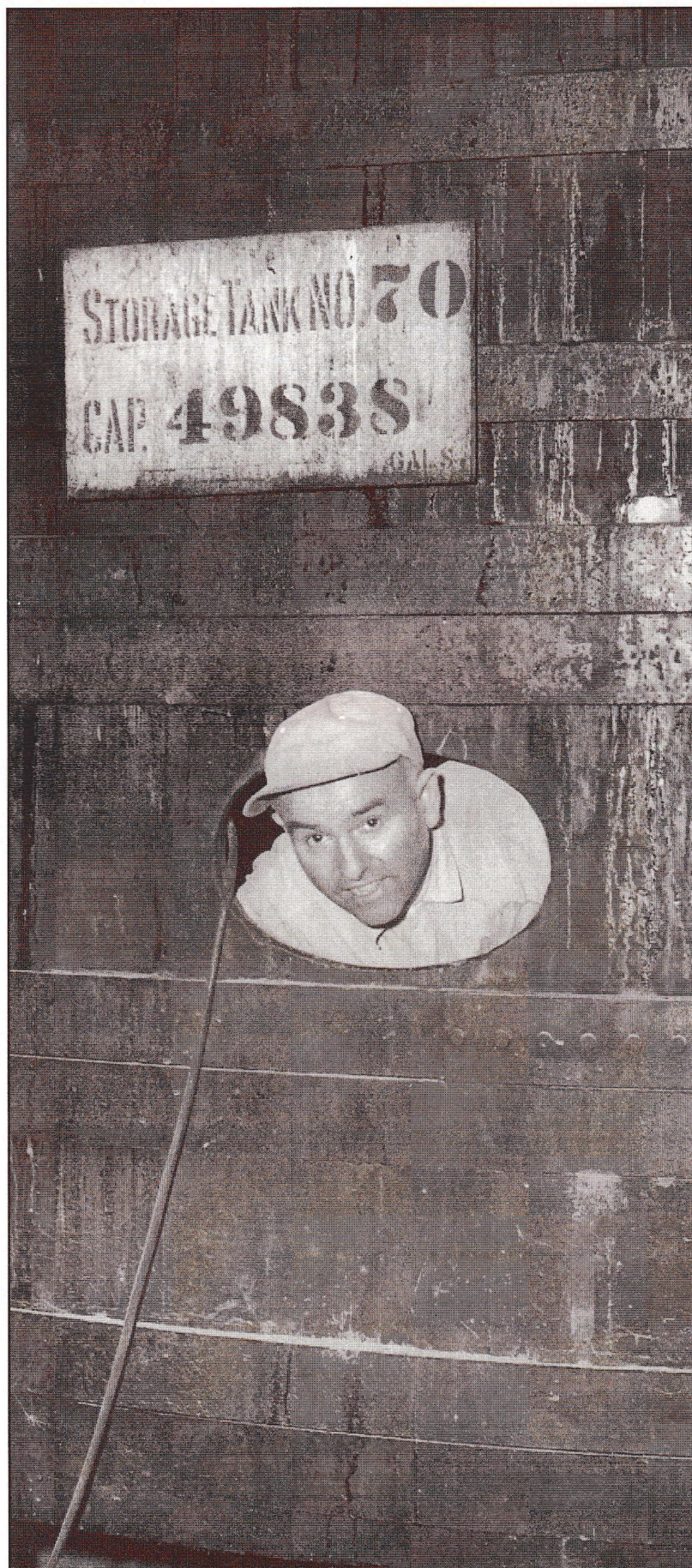
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▲ A surprise in Storage Tank #70.

*Photo courtesy of San Joaquin County Museum.*